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THE TRAPS OF REALISM: THE DEBATE OVER UNIVERSALS IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY AND THE THOMISTS OF COLOGNE

Silvia NEGRI

Abstract

Fifteenth-century Thomists were deeply involved in the debate over the nature and mode of universals, which was at the core of the so-called *Wegestreit* in the late Middle Ages. Their solutions were intended to fill some theoretical gaps left by Thomas Aquinas, who, although he touched on the theme in his work, did not leave a systematic treatment of the topic. This paper investigates the opinions of the major Thomist masters of Cologne as found in their Commentaries on the *De ente et essentia* and in other sources. It aims to bring into focus the strategies by which those masters ‘canonized’ Aquinas’s doctrine, developing their own views in the process and differentiating them from the views of their institutional rivals.

In his late fifteenth-century commentary on the *Ars vetus*, composed “according to the doctrine of the Moderns,” Ingolstadt master Johannes Parreudt (fl. 1495) noted with a certain irony that the opinions of many famous masters on the nature of universals were so diverse that, as he says, “I could almost compose a massive book on universals, if I wanted to explicate all the opinions of those who universalize.”¹ Prudently, the nominalist then declared that he would

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the meeting *Thomas d’Aquin et la querelle des universaux*, Paris 18-19 February 2011, as part of the French-German research project *THOM [ANR-DFG]*. I wish to thank Peter Eardley for his assistance in revising the English text.

1. Cf. JOHANNES PARREUDT, *Textus veteris artis [...] Item exercitata circa hoc secundum doctrinam Modernorum collecta et bene emendata per venerabilem virum magistrum Johannem Parreudt [...]*, ed. H. HOLCZEL, Nürnberg, J. Schonsperger 1502 [hereafter abbreviated as: *Textus veteris artis*], f. a 2v-a 3r: “Quoddam est universale in essendo,

avoid “setting a trap before his own feet” by attempting to address this complex state of affairs.² In a similarly polemical vein, other nominalists at the same university accused their realist rivals of having such disparate opinions that “there would hardly have been two of them who maintained the same position about universals.”³ Such accusations, especially from admittedly hostile sources, should come as no great surprise. As has been well documented by historians working on the period, the intellectual environment at many late-medieval universities, especially in Central Europe, was characterized by the commitment of masters to different, and often competing schools of thought. The practice of fifteenth-century philosophy and theology, in particular, was famous for the stances adopted by the followers of different institutionalized *viae*, each of them leaning on the authority of one or another of the great masters from the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.⁴ One might say that scholarly production was

scilicet quod in sua essentia et natura commune est pluribus individuís. Et an illud sit in rerum natura, est dubium apud plures. [...] Et quasi unum magnum librum de universalibus componere possem, si omnia motiva illorum universalizantium in medium adducere vellem.” On Johannes Parreudt, see C. VON PRANTL, “Parreut, Johann,” in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 25, Leipzig 1887, p. 183, with other references to Prantl’s studies; and M.J.F.M. HOENEN, “‘Secundum vocem concordare, sensu tamen discrepare’. Der Streit um die Deutung des Aristoteles an der Universität Ingolstadt im späten 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhundert,” in: A. FIDORA – J. FRIED – M. LUTZ-BACHMANN – L. SCHORN-SCHÜTTE (eds.), *Politischer Aristotelismus und Religion in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Berlin 2007, pp. 67–87, esp. 72–73 and 79–86. For a brief sketch of late medieval logic and its influence on early modern philosophy, see also A. SEIFERT, *Logik zwischen Scholastik und Humanismus. Das Kommentarwerk Johann Ecks*, München 1978, chap. 2, esp. pp. 16–17 with notes on pp. 106–108.

2. Cf. JOHANNES PARREUDT, *Textus veteris artis*, f. a 3r: “Sed fortasse mihiipsi laqueum (quo me in errores involverem) ante pedes ponerem.”

3. See F. EHRLE, *Der Sentenzenkommentar Peters von Candia, des Pisaner Papstes Alexanders V. Ein Beitrag zur Scheidung der Schulen in der Scholastik des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts und zur Geschichte des Wegestreites*, Münster 1925, pp. 331–332, “Ingolstädter Schriftstücke über den Wegestreit (Wende des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts)”: “At Antiqui nullam habent neque habere possunt aliquam necessitantem rationem ponendi universalis realis, sed soli auctoritati innituntur. Praeterea erroneam esse eorum positionem, ostenditur ex eo quod fere omnes sunt varii inter se, ut non facile duos reperiatis, qui de universali idem sentiant.”

4. On the disputes between nominalists and realists, and also between the different schools belonging to the same *via*, such as Thomists and Albertists, with special reference to the German universities, see: M.J.F.M. HOENEN, “*Via antiqua* and *via moderna* in the fifteenth century: doctrinal, institutional, and church political factors in the *Wegestreit*,” in: R.L. FRIEDMAN – L. O. NIELSEN (eds.), *The Medieval Heritage in Early Modern Metaphysics and Modal Theory, 1400–1700*, Dordrecht 2003, pp. 9–36; P. RUTTEN, “*Duae*

therefore intrinsically bound to a specific institution — a university, or more specifically, a college (*bursa*). Thinking, in short, had an immediate institutional and party affiliation.⁵ A doctrinal position was *tout court* also a positioning towards other competing currents. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that a fifteenth-century philosophical position was often also a political position.

Against this background, it becomes clear that the various doctrines and opinions on one debated topic were essentially contextual: they could change, or at least take on different nuances, according to the institutional context in which they were expressed. That is, their content was bound to the reciprocal positioning of the masters who articulated them. The practical results of this situation were, thus, a diversification and multiplication of positions, not only with reference to competing *viae* — *via antiqua* against *via moderna* — but also between different currents within each of the two *viae*, albeit acting under different institutional circumstances. This diversity of views was particularly evident, as we will establish below, on the question of universals, which was foundational to the division between nominalists and realists, and which became, for various reasons, a central subject of debate.⁶

opinioniones probabiles: Der Kölner Wegestreit und seine Verbreitung an den Universitäten des 15. Jahrhunderts,” in: L. CESALLI – N. GERMANN – M.J.F.M. HOENEN (eds.), *University, Council, City. Intellectual Culture on the Rhine (1300-1550)*, Turnhout 2007, pp. 113-134; M.J.F.M. HOENEN, “Philosophie und Theologie im 15. Jahrhundert. Die Universität Freiburg und der Wegestreit,” in: D. MERTENS (ed.), *Von der hohen Schule zur Universität der Neuzeit*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2007, pp. 67-91. See also G. RITTER’s classical: *Via antiqua und via moderna auf den deutschen Universitäten des XV. Jahrhunderts*, Heidelberg 1922 (2nd ed. Darmstadt 1963) and A.L. GABRIEL, “‘Via antiqua’ and ‘via moderna’ and the Migration of Paris Students and Masters to the German Universities in the Fifteenth Century,” in: A. ZIMMERMANN (ed.), *Antiqui und Moderni. Traditionsbewußtsein und Fortschrittsbewußtsein im späteren Mittelalter*, Berlin / New York 1974, pp. 439-483.

5. Cf. HOENEN, “Via antiqua and via moderna.”

6. This fact has already been pointed out by many scholars; cf. for example RITTER, *Via antiqua*, p. 69. One of the reasons for this fact, according to Zenon Kaluza, was “la place considérable que les universaux occupent dans l’ensemble du savoir philosophique et du savoir scientifique tout court.” See Z. KALUZA, *Les querelles doctrinales à Paris. Nominalistes et réalistes aux confins du XIV^e et du XV^e siècles*, Bergamo 1988, here p. 23. Maarten Hoenen has clearly shown how the question about the nature of universals became at the beginning of the 15th century a central topic in the debate on the relation between theology and philosophy, which was really at stake in the *Wegestreit*; cf. M.J.F.M. HOENEN, “Zurück zu Autorität und Tradition. Geistesgeschichtliche Hintergründe des

Such an apparent lack of cohesion among the various realist schools lay, at least partly, behind the above-mentioned Ingolstadt nominalists' criticism. Moreover, the nominalists had no higher opinion of the individual schools within the *via antiqua*. In the above-mentioned Ingolstadt document, for example, the Thomist Petrus Schwarz (c. 1435 - c. 1483) denounced other Thomists for what he perceived as their misunderstanding of Thomas's doctrine on universals.⁷ Such disagreement within the realist school merely confirmed for the nominalists that their adversaries were confused with respect to the question of universals. Jodocus Trutfetter (c. 1460-1519), a famous nominalist working in Erfurt at the end of the fifteenth century, while discussing the notion of *verbum mentis* in his *Summa in totam physicen*, summarized the nominalist attitude when he stated: "There is such diversity among the Thomists about its quiddity [*sc.* of the *verbum mentis*], that I would finish my paper and my time before I would be able to set out the opinions of all those people."⁸

As we will see, nominalist remarks, such as the foregoing, were not merely rhetorical. Rather, they were in fact well rooted in a fundamental division on the realist side, and also amongst Thomists, who disagreed over how exactly to interpret Aquinas's texts. In the fifteenth century, however, the debate between the various factions of the realist school went beyond mere differences in exegesis, taking on

Traditionalismus an den spätmittelalterlichen Universitäten," in: J.A. AERTSEN – M. PICKAVÉ (eds.), „Herbst des Mittelalters“? Fragen zur Bewertung des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts, Berlin / New York 2004, pp. 133-146.

7. Cf. EHRLE, *Der Sentenzenkommentar*, p. 332: "Nam iam longe aliter de universali sentient quam ante adventum fratris Petri Schwarcz, qui eos in aliam traduxit opinionem, et publice reprehendit eorum errorem et qui ita ut Antiqui sentirent, eos dixit non intelligere scripta sancti Thomae."

8. JODOCUS TRUTFETTER, *Summa in totam physicen, hoc est philosophiam naturalem, conformiter siquidem verae sophiae, quae est Theologia*, ed. M. MALER, Erfurt 1514, f. Ff Ir: "Immo de huius [*scil.* verbi mentis] quidditate tanta est etiam inter Thomistas diversitas quod prius me charta et dies deficerent, quam omnium sententias recenserem." On the academic activity and production of the nominalist Master at the Erfurter University, which was traditionally devoted to the *via moderna*, cf. E. KLEINEIDAM, *Universitas Studii Erfordensis. Überblick über die Geschichte der Universität Erfurt im Mittelalter (1392-1521)*, Teil II: 1460-1521, Leipzig 1969, esp. pp. 143 ff., 292-294; W. URBAN, "Die 'via moderna' an der Universität Erfurt," in: H.A. OBERMAN (ed.), *Gregor von Rimini. Werk und Wirkung bis zur Reformation*, Berlin / New York 1981, pp. 311-330; J. PILVOUSEK, "Jodocus Trutfetter (1460-1519) und der Erfurter Nominalismus," in: D. VON DER PFORDTEN (ed.), *Große Denker Erfurts und der Erfurter Universität*, Göttingen 2002, pp. 96-117.

new and substantial implications in the context of the academic *Wegestreit*.

In order to bring out the argumentative strategies of the Thomists' account of universals, I will concentrate on the local context which contributed to shaping them. Cologne will provide the setting for my inquiry. Historical circumstances as well as interesting personalities contributed to making its academic milieu a centre of lively dispute which had, in its institutionalised form, a strong influence on other universities within Central Europe and which may therefore serve, for the modern researcher, as a paradigmatic case study.⁹

1. *The Legacy of Thomas Aquinas*

As is commonly known, Aquinas left no exhaustive treatise on universals, touching on this topic only indirectly. His most comprehensive treatment of the problem, i.e., in chapter 3 of his *De ente et essentia*, was in fact designed to describe the question of the relationship between essence in composite beings and the "ratio generis, speciei et differentiae." He did not, as such, address the traditional sets of questions on the topic of universals.¹⁰ Of course the text furnished

9. On the history of the University of Cologne in the fifteenth century, with the birth of the *Bursae* and the spread of the so-called *Wegestreit*, cf. E. MEUTHEN, *Kölner Universitätsgeschichte, Band I: Die alte Universität*, Köln / Wien 1988, esp. pp. 52-202. More specifically, on the *Bursae* in Cologne see the classic work by G.-R. TEWES, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Köln 1993. The academic and collegial model of the University of Cologne had an important influence upon other universities, such as Leuven, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Copenhagen, Greifswald and Cracow, as is now well-established: see for example MEUTHEN, *Kölner Universitätsgeschichte*, pp. 176-178, 194-202; TEWES, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät*, pp. 395-664; ID., "Die Erfurter Nominalisten und ihre thomistischen Widersacher in Köln, Leipzig und Wittenberg. Ein Beitrag zum deutschen Humanismus am Vorabend der Reformation," in: A. SPEER (ed.), *Die Bibliotheca Amploniana. Ihre Bedeutung im Spannungsfeld von Aristotelismus, Nominalismus und Humanismus*, Berlin / New York 1995, pp. 447-488, esp. pp. 450-45. On the 'recruitment area' of the university of Cologne, see for example R.C. SCHWINGES, "On Recruitment in German Universities from the Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries," in: W.J. COURTENAY – J. MIETHKE (eds.), *Universities and Schooling in Medieval Society*, Leiden / Boston / Köln 2000, pp. 32-48, esp. 39.

10. Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *De ente et essentia*, 3, ed. Leon. 43, Roma 1976, pp. 374-375. Jorge Gracia has maintained that the very move of Thomas in the *De ente et essentia*, with reference to the question of universals, consisted first of all in rejecting his predecessors' traditional presuppositions and formulations of the problem; see J.J.E. GRACIA, "Cutting the Gordian Knot of Ontology: Thomas's Solution to the Problem of Universals," in:

clearly the idea that the *ratio universalis* occurs to humans only according to the being that it has in the intellect.¹¹ Still, Aquinas's doctrine concerning essence-as-predicable and essence-as-universal has raised some doubts and is debated even today.¹² It has been pointed out by recent scholars that some ambiguities contained in the early work (for example concerning the nature of the relation between essence as such and its being in individuals or in the intellect)¹³ disappeared in the later works of Thomas, where he maintained a gnoseological understanding of essences considered absolutely, thus subsuming them under the category of universals.¹⁴ Other modern scholars have argued, in contrast, that Thomas supported a coherent gnoseological comprehension of universality and predicability of the essences from the *De ente et essentia* on throughout his entire career.¹⁵ Also certain passages from other works — such as that found in his

D.M. GALLAGHER (ed.), *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy*, Washington D.C. 1994, pp. 16-36. On chapter 3 of the *De ente et essentia*, and more generally on Aquinas's doctrine of universals, see also J. OWENS, "Common Nature: A Point of Comparison Between Thomistic and Scotistic Metaphysics," in: *Mediaeval Studies* 19 (1957), pp. 1-14; A. DE LIBERA, *La querelle des universaux. De Platon à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Paris 1996, pp. 262-283; D.L. BLACK, "Mental Existence in Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna," in: *Mediaeval Studies* 61 (1999), pp. 45-79; G. GALLUZZO, "Aquinas on Common Nature and Universals," in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 71 (2004), pp. 131-171.

11. Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *De ente et essentia*, 3, pp. 374-375, 88-99.

12. Giorgio Pini has pointed out the ambiguities posed by Thomas's *De ente et essentia*. According to Pini, in this early work Aquinas distinguished, in a way different from both the tradition and his own later views, between the universality of an essence and its predicability, and with that he guaranteed an ontological relationship between essence itself and reality; see G. PINI, "Absoluta consideratio naturae: Tommaso d'Aquino e la dottrina avicenniana dell'essenza," in: *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 15 (2004), pp. 387-438. Also Alain de Libera detected the same ambiguity in the doctrine of the *De ente et essentia*, where Thomas, according to the scholar, was "ni réaliste ni conceptualiste"; see DE LIBERA, *La querelle des universaux*, p. 283.

13. On this point, see also GALLUZZO, "Aquinas on common nature," pp. 136 ff.

14. Cf. PINI, "Absoluta consideratio naturae," esp. pp. 427 ff. A slightly different interpretation of the role played by the essence as absolutely considered, or as "indifferent" — in Avicennian sense — in later works of Thomas, such as the *Sentencia libri De anima* or the *Summa theologiae*, is provided by Galluzzo, "Aquinas on common nature," esp. pp. 164-171.

15. This opinion has been recently held by Pasquale Porro in his talk "Indifferenza e predicabilità delle essenze in Tommaso d'Aquino (o Tommaso d'Aquino sul numero 6)" in the context of the meeting *Thomas d'Aquin et la querelle des universaux*, Paris 18-19 February 2011. Porro rejects the idea that in the *De ente et essentia* there is a *real* differentiation or disjunction between universality and predicability as two features respectively pertaining to the intellectual apprehension of a thing and to the thing itself; on the

Sentences commentary, where Thomas gave, quite traditionally, a threefold characterization of the universal (i.e., in itself, as instantiated in an individual, and as a universal concept in the mind),¹⁶ or the passage in his commentary on the *De anima* where he mentioned the *natura communis* with reference to universals¹⁷ — certainly left considerable scope for discussion to his successors on the topic of universals.¹⁸

Although late medieval Thomists seem not to have perceived that this topic was a relevant exegetical problem from a perspective internal to the works of their master,¹⁹ it is nonetheless clear that their reworking of Thomas's opinion on universals grew in and thanks to a substantial gap. That is, the doctrine of universals, insofar as it assumed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a better articulated

contrary, he argues that according to Thomas both the universality and the predicability of an essence clearly depend on the mediation of an intellectual act.

16. Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, II, dist. 3, quaest. 3, art. 2, ed. P. MANDONNET, Paris 1929, p. 117. On this text, see M. BORGIO, "Universals and the Trinity: Aquinas's Commentary on Book I of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*," in: *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 18 (2007), pp. 315-342, here p. 319.

17. Cf. for example THOMAS AQUINAS, *Sententia libri De anima*, II, 12, ed. Leon. 45.1, Roma 1984, pp. 115-116, 96-121: "[...] considerandum est quod universale potest accipi dupliciter: uno modo potest dici universale ipsa natura communis, prout subiacet intentioni universalitatis, alio modo secundum se [...]. Ipsa autem natura cui advenit intentio universalitatis, puta natura hominis, habet duplex esse: unum quidem materiale, secundum quod est in materia naturali; aliud autem immateriale, secundum quod est in intellectu. Secundum igitur quod habet esse in materia naturali, non potest ei advenire intentio universalitatis, quia per materiam individuatur; advenit igitur ei universalitatis intentio, secundum quod abstrahitur a materia individuali". To be clear: I am not concerned here with the problems of Thomas's own characterization of the notion of common nature, nor with his reference to the doctrine of universals, which, as mentioned, still puzzle modern scholars.

18. Cf. DE LIBERA, *La querelle des universaux*, p. 283.

19. In this sense we can consider the *Concordantiae* of the Italian Dominican Peter of Bergamo (d. 1482), which served as an important instrument in the process of the constitution, stabilization and legitimation of Aquinas's authority in the fifteenth century. As they recollected and solved the presumed contradictions internal to Thomas's works, these *Concordantiae* are witnesses to the exegetical problems concerning the holy doctor's production at that time. Now, in the version of the *Concordantiae* enlarged by Petrus's disciple Ambrosius de Alemania, 4 concordances are devoted to the entry "universale": a quite small number, if compared for example with the 43 devoted to "anima," the 32 dedicated to "intellectus," the 16 related to "scientia" and the 22 devoted to "forma." For the entries related to "universale" cf. PETRUS A BERGOMO, *Concordantiae Textuum discordantium Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, Firenze 1982 (editio phototypica), p. 553, n. 1194-1197^A.

and complete form, went beyond Aquinas's thought. In a certain sense, it aimed to fill, for different reasons, what was perceived as a doctrinal incompleteness or lack of systematic coherence. One line of development of the topic was conveyed, for example, by treatises or questions on intentions and intentionality. These seem to constitute a quite independent genre, which found their principal source in the works of Hervaeus Natalis, and which followed a doctrinal vein that developed Thomas's reflections.²⁰ Moreover, a significant number of Thomistic pseudepigrapha on universals circulated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²¹ Such works limited themselves in some cases to the content of the *De ente et essentia*; in other cases, however, they enlarged its doctrinal scope by discussing a broader spectrum of logical questions, thus also incorporating, for example, passages from Albert the Great.²² Despite the differences in style and intention, however, one can still recognize in these works a typical twofold assertion according to which the universal in act, or *actualiter*, is in the soul or depends on the soul, whereas the universal in potency, or *apritudinaliter*, is an extra-mental thing.²³ These later Thomistic

20. Cf. P.M. TAVUZZI, "Hervaeus Natalis and the philosophical logic of the Thomism of the Renaissance," in: *Doctor communis: Acta et Commentationes Pontificiae Academiae Romanae S. Thomae Aquinatis* 45 (1992), pp. 132-152. Concerning Hervaeus' Treatise *De secundis intentionibus*, cf. J.P. DOYLE, *A Treatise of Master Hervaeus Natalis (d. 1323), the Doctor Perspicacissimus, On Second Intentions. Vol. 1: An English Translation & Vol. 2: A Latin Edition*, Milwaukee 2008. Also Gerard de Monte wrote a treatise on second intentions, which is transmitted in a fifteenth-century manuscript: Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A X 67, ff. 94r-106vb. The text was copied by friar Casper Wittolff in Cologne, as is said in the colophon of the text: "Explicit tractatus de secundis intentionibus magistri gerhardi de monte per me fratrem Casper wittolff in colonia" (f. 106vb). For a brief presentation of the treatise see G. MEERSSEMAN, "Eine weitere Schrift Gerhards de Monte," in: *Jahrbuch des kölnischen Geschichtsvereins* 19 (1937), pp. 128-132. Concerning the manuscript, see also C.H. LOHR, *Aristotelica Helvetica: Catalogus codicum Latinorum in bibliothecis Confederationis Helveticae asservatorum quibus versiones expositionesque operum Aristotelis continentur*, Freiburg 1994, p. 19.

21. Cf. the so-called Treatise *Universale esse: Tractatus de Universalibus attribuito a San Tommaso d'Aquino*, ed. C. Ottaviano, Roma 1932; the so-called Treatise *Circa* and the Treatise *Quoniam sicut dicit* in: THOMAS AQUINAS, *Opuscula Omnia*, tomus V, *Opuscula Spuria*, ed. P. MANDONNET, Paris 1927, pp. 383-391 and 392-398; and the so-called Treatise *Quoniam secundum Philosophum*: W. SENKO, "Pseudo-Aegidii Romani *Tractatus de universalibus*, ad fidem codicum manuscriptorum," in: *Mediaevalia Philosophica Polonorum* 14 (1970), pp. 55-86.

22. See for example the Treatise *Universale esse*, pp. 56-57.

23. Cf. for example *ibid.*, p. 55 and the Treatise *Circa*, p. 384.

doctrines on universals thus found an invariable core in the belief that the true universal is in the mind, namely the concept, which represents the plurality of real individuals through its similarity with them. Regardless of how this doctrine was expressed, it was well rooted in the texts of Thomas. Moreover, the assertion that the *ratio universalitatis* properly corresponds to a nature “secundum esse quod habet in intellectu” was usually backed up by the authority of the ancients — Aristotle, Boethius, Avicenna, Averroes — most of whom had also been utilized by Aquinas.²⁴

By claiming that the proper essence of universals was their existence in the intellect, the Thomists made the gnoseological aspect a central feature of the problem itself. Indeed, one of the main reworkings of Thomas’s statements on universals was related to the broader field of the theory of cognition, not only to that of logic. Not only in their commentaries on the *De anima*, but also when commenting on the *Logica vetus* or the *De ente et essentia*, the Thomists were faced with questions concerning the intellectual process of the production of universals. They discussed, for example, the various modes of abstraction, the relationship between the species and the intention and the nature of the *verbum mentis*. The main problem was, therefore, as is evident, the necessity of defining the very nature of this intellectual universal, and, moreover, of stating its relationship to the object to which it refers.

But this last question was arguably related to more traditional inquiries about the various modes in which essences can be thought and predicated and in which universals can *exist* — *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*: a type of inquiry to which Thomas had not really committed himself. And it was just in this field that one finds two dominant positions being maintained: one inclining more towards a realist position, the other tending towards a conceptualist one.

As we shall see, the Cologne masters in particular strategically operated within this dual framework, emphasizing one aspect or the other,

24. See for example classical *loci* in THOMAS AQUINAS, *De ente et essentia*, 3, p. 375, 99-102, where the master mentions Averroes and Avicenna, or in ID., *Sentencia libri De anima*, I, 1, p. 7, 211 ff., where Thomas comments the Aristotelian sentence according to which “animal autem universale aut nichil est aut posterius.”

depending on whom they were arguing against and what literary genre they were using.

2. *Thomistic Commentaries on the De ente et essentia*

In order to analyze some important sources belonging to the Cologne milieu, we might begin with some commentaries on the *De ente et essentia* by two of the most prominent secular masters of the Thomistic *Bursa Montana*: Henry of Gorkum (c. 1378-1431), the founder of the College, and Gerard de Monte (c. 1400-1480).²⁵ In contrast to their commentaries on Aristotle, which were related to their curricular academic teaching in the Faculty of Arts, their commentaries on the *De ente et essentia* were most probably employed inside the *Bursa*.²⁶ This was the case with Henry's *Positiones metaphysicales* on Thomas's *De ente et essentia*, printed in Cologne in 1502 by Heinrich Quentell.²⁷ As stated in the heading and in the colophon of the

25. The role of these figures in the Cologne landscape is well outlined by MEUTHEN, *Kölner Universitätsgeschichte*, and TEWES, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät*. On the Cologne Thomism, see also H.J.M.J. GORIS, "Thomism in Fifteenth-Century Germany," in: M. BOSE – P. VAN GEEST – H. J. M. J. GORIS (eds.), *Aquinas as Authority*, Leuven 2002, pp. 1-24. On Henry of Gorkum, the Thomist master of the *Bursa Montana*, see A.G. WEILER, *Heinrich von Gorkum († 1431). Seine Stellung in der Philosophie und der Theologie des Spätmittelalters*, Hilversum / Einsiedeln / Zürich / Köln 1962; on Gerard de Monte and his quarrel with Heymericus de Campo, see G. MEERSEMAN, *Geschichte des Albertismus*: Heft II. *Die ersten Kölner Kontroversen*, Roma 1935 and M.J.F.M. HOENEN, "Comment lire les grands maîtres? Gérard de Monte, Heymeric de Campo et la question de l'accord entre Albert le Grand et Thomas d'Aquin (1456)," in: *Revue Thomiste* 108 (2008), pp. 105-130.

26. Classic studies on the *De ente et essentia* and its commentary tradition are: M. GRABMANN, "Die Schrift 'De ente et essentia' und die Seinsmetaphysik des heiligen Thomas von Aquin," in: ID., *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben. Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Scholastik und Mystik*, Bd. 1, München 1926, pp. 314-331; ID., "De commentariis in opusculum S. Thomae Aquinatis De ente et essentia," in: *Acta Pontificiae Academiae Romanae* 5 (1938), pp. 7-20; K. FECKES, "Das Opusculum des hl. Thomas von Aquin 'De ente et essentia' im Lichte seiner Kommentare," in: A. LANG – J. LECHNER – M. SCHMAUS (eds.), *Aus der Geisteswelt des Mittelalters. Studien und Texte Martin Grabmann zur Vollendung des 60. Lebensjahres von Freunden und Schülern gewidmet*, 1. Halbband, Münster i. W. 1935, pp. 667-681. See also W. SENKO, "Les commentaires anonymes du XV^e siècle sur le 'De ente et essentia' de S. Thomas d'Aquin," in: *Mediaevalia Philosophica Polonorum* 3 (1959), pp. 7-16.

27. Cf. *Quaestiones compendiosae ex congerie positionum metaphysicalium magistri Henrici de Gorynchem, Gymnasy Montis insignis Acahemiae Coloniensis primi gymnasiarum, haud parvo conamine traductae, ac tandem compendio doctoris sancti De quidditatibus*

manuscript, the text is composed of several *Quaestiones compendiosae* chosen from his collection of “metaphysical positions,” which were almost certainly discussed by Henry in the first decades of the fifteenth century. With the printed text, however, we are dealing with a compendium that was prepared by one of the masters of the *Bursa Montana* — possibly by the other famous Thomist at the *Bursa Lambertus de Monte* (1430/1435-1499)²⁸ — towards the end of the century. The text is intended for those students who approached “first philosophy” after having devoted themselves to the “physical disciplines.” As founder of the Thomistic Gymnasium, Henry’s position was selected as a point of reference, and also judged as “consistent” with the “disputative process of the masters of the Gymnasium.”²⁹ The text was therefore clearly conceived as a handbook of Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics insofar as it described in its introductory section an uninterrupted relationship between Aristotle’s thinking, the doctrine of Aquinas, and the teaching of Gorkum and of his successors on the one hand, and of the learning of the “baccalaurii magistrandi” on the other.³⁰ Although such “school-awareness” some-

entium *solenter insertae, disputativo processui magistrorum praememorati Gymnasii omni-
quaque conformes, quibus baccalaurii magistrandi, a nonnullis metaphysici appellati, iamiam
physicas supergredientes disciplinas, ea quae primae reservantur philosophiae, intelligent [...]*,
ed. H. QUENTELL, Köln 1502. From now on the title of the work will be abbreviated as
Quaestiones compendiosae. On the role of book printing in the polemics between various
schools in late medieval Cologne, see W. SCHMITZ, “Das Kölner Verlagswesen der Frühen
Neuzeit als Mittler für die Bildung im Rheinland,” in: A. RUTZ (ed.), *Das Rheinland als
Schul- und Bildungslandschaft (1250-1750)*, Köln 2010, pp. 233-260, esp. 235-237.

28. Cf. WEILER, *Heinrich von Gorkum*, p. 118. On Lambert de Monte see for example: H.G. SENER, “Was geht Lambert von Heerenberg die Seligkeit des Aristoteles an?,” in: A. ZIMMERMANN (ed.), *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Geistesgeschichte und ihren Quellen*, Berlin / New York 1982, pp. 293-311 and S. NEGRI, “La *quaestio* ‘De salvatione Aristotelis’ del Tomista Lamberto di Monte,” in: A. PALAZZO (ed.), *L’antichità classica nel pensiero medievale*, Porto 2011, pp. 413-440. On the origin and early development of Albertism, see the studies of G. Meersseman, especially *Geschichte des Albertismus*: Heft I. *Die Pariser Anfänge des Kölner Albertismus*, Paris 1933.

29. Cf. the heading of the *Quaestiones compendiosae* reported above, footnote 27.

30. See *Quaestiones compendiosae*, f. 1ra: “Statui iccirco nobiliores flores metaphysicae circa aureum tractatum doctoris sancti *De ente et essentia* sese offerentes in unum colligere et eos post quaestiones motas instar syllogismorum summam resolvere. Cuius resolutionis fundamentum et anchora firmissima erit philosophorum princeps Aristoteles, eiusque gloriosissimus expositor sanctus Thomas et magister Henricus de Gorynchem, qui elegantiores sententias primae philosophiae artificiosissime comportavit et ad quasdam magistrales redegit positiones. Quarum plurimae cernuntur quaestionibus huius compendij quam congruentissime insertae ad eruditionem baccalauriorum Bursae Montis in

times took the form of a harmonizing combination of different opinions of the college's masters (this is the case, for example, with the discussion concerning the real difference between being and essence),³¹ in the questions devoted to the doctrine of universals there is not such an explicit mixture of opinions internal to the Thomistic school. Rather, the discussion is limited to the disagreements between different schools of thought.

As for Gerard de Monte's commentary on Thomas's *De quidditatibus rerum* (an alternative title for the *De ente et essentia*), written in the first half of the fifteenth century and repeatedly printed in Cologne from 1485 on, this was also intended as a scholarly tool for summarizing, in a canonical way, Thomas's doctrine.³² As to its form, it provides a quite literal *expositio textus* of the *De ente et essentia*, and develops its themes in some further considerations and *dubitaciones*. The text shows a substantial homogeneity with the *Quaestiones*, at least with reference to the core thesis on which I am focusing. Therefore, I will take into account both texts together, trying to identify some recurring features in their strategy of argumentation.

An initially recognizable step in the *Quaestiones compendiosae* is an interpretation of the Thomist position of what we might call a 'moderate realism,' differing from some form of radical realism on the one hand, and nominalism on the other. The first question about universals

Colonia, qui physicam considerationem transcendentem negotiari merentur circa ea quae extra materiam inveniuntur."

31. The passage contains a very interesting example of the concordistic efforts of Thomas's followers. The author of the *Quaestiones* discusses the relationship between being and essence, and juxtaposes two opposite *corollaria*, reporting respectively the opinion of Henry of Gorkum and that of Gerard de Monte. The concordistic solution finally suggested rests upon the texts of Thomas; see *Quaestiones compendiosae*, f. 14rb-va. Cf. also WEILER, *Heinrich von Gorkum*, pp. 117-118.

32. See GERARD DE MONTE, *In Thomae Aquinatis tractatum De ente et essentia commentum*, ed. T. MOLNER or K. WELKER, Köln 1485/86 (in what follows I will abbreviate the title of the text as: *In De ente et essentia commentum*). This commentary was also printed in Cologne many times. In 1493 for example it was printed by Heinrich Quentell together with the *Quaestiones super Parva naturalia Aristotelis* of Johannes Versor and Thomas's *De ente et essentia* (GW M50262). As a *terminus ante quem* for its composition we could assume 1426, if we trust the colophon of the text in the manuscript: *Tübingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Mc 142*, f. 62vb; cf. H. RÖCKELEIN, *Die lateinischen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, Teil I*, beschrieben von H. RÖCKELEIN unter Mitwirkung von G. BRINKHUS, H. WEIGEL und U. HASCHER-BURGER, Wiesbaden 1991, pp. 284-285.

discussed by Henry concerns the existence of universals in relation to singular beings.³³ The syllogistic solution to the problem seems to tend towards a kind of realism.³⁴ In one sense, a *universale* is a supreme cause which can produce many specifically different effects; such a universal cause is studied in metaphysics.³⁵ Moreover, the universal can be conceived as a “second intention” in a “material way,” that is as a nature — such as “man, animal, horse” — to which the intellect “sometimes attributes the intention of universality.” This universal is also said to have being in extra-mental things.³⁶ Such a universal, “signified through concrete things,” is not really different from those singular beings to which it is referred; rather, it exists in those singulars.³⁷ Finally, the universal is intended “as such,” i.e., as that nature — “man, animal, horse” — conceived with respect to universality. This is said to possess existence due to its “relation to the soul” (*universale in praedicando*).³⁸

33. *Quaestiones compendiosae*, f. 7va: “Quaeritur utrum ponenda sint universalialia rebus sensibilibus contradistincta atque ab eis separata.”

34. Henry constructs a quasi-syllogistic argument (*Quaestiones compendiosae*, f. 7va): “Maior: Asserit philosophorum recta doctrina, secundum duos primos modos universalialia esse veraciter in rebus ad extra. Minor: Secundum tertiam universalis acceptionem docet universalialia esse philosophorum schola per relationem ad actum animae. Conclusio: Secundum singulas suas particulas negandus est titulus quaestionis, iuxta illum sensum qui ascribitur positioni Platonis.”

35. *Ibid.*: “[...] nam universale uno modo capitur pro universali in causando, et dicitur illud quod eque primo potest esse causa plurium effectuum specie differentium. [...] De talibus enim universalibus intelligi potest illud dictum quod metaphysica est de maxime universalibus, quia est de primis principiis et causis entium.” Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, I, 2, 982a247-25.

36. *Ibid.*: “Alio modo contingit loqui de universali prout est secundae intentionis. Et hoc diversimode, qui vel per universalialia intelliguntur ipsae naturae materialiter, quibus intellectus quandoque attribuit intentionem universalitatis [...] Similiter patet quia universalialia secundo modo dicta habent esse in rebus ad extra. Quia hoc modo per universalialia intelliguntur ipsae naturae, cuiusmodi sunt animal, equus, lapis etc., quae designantur per hunc nominativum pluralem ‘universalialia’, eo quod intellectus circa eas adinvenit respectum secundae intentionis, quando circa eas negotiatur intelligendo comparisonem earum ad sua subiecta, de quibus enunciantur. Constat autem tales naturas habere esse in rebus ad extra.”

37. *Ibid.*: “[...] naturae significatae per talia concreta, homo, equus, animal, sunt immixtae singularibus, et per eas singularia corruptibilia constituuntur in esse, nec possunt ab eis secundum esse separari. [...] naturae quae significantur talibus concretis, homo, equus aut lapis, sunt singulares secundum esse quod habent in rebus ad extra, et eadem naturae comparatae ad actum animae dicuntur universales.”

38. *Ibid.*: “Vel alio modo per universalialia intelliguntur universalialia inquantum talia, id est prout ipsae naturae subsunt intentioni universalitatis. Et sic tunc vel loquimur de eis per respectum ad actum animae, et hoc modo dicuntur universalialia in praedicando [...]”

To this kind of nature “known by the intellect without any individuating condition” is attributed “the definition of the universal, i.e., being one in many things and of many things.”³⁹ That is to say, as is underlined in a corollary, universality properly understood, to the extent that it possesses being, is in the soul.⁴⁰ Apart from the emphatic denial of the separate existence of the universal in a Platonic sense, i.e., as an “ydea” or “exemplar form,” Henry does accord a mode of existence to the other types of universal, even if the existence of the universal as such is found only in the intellect, and the universal *in re* is solely understood with reference to singular beings.

As mentioned, Henry’s first position seems thus to set the boundaries between extreme realism, non-Platonic realism and nominalism. The *nominales* are briefly mentioned as supporters of the thesis that universals “in praedicando” are “termini communes sive in mente sive in voce.”⁴¹ This position is, however, neither discussed nor refuted. It quite evidently did not constitute an urgent polemical point of reference.⁴² This is also true of Gerard’s commentary, where the nominalist viewpoint is not even really challenged. Rather, his dismissal of nominalism remains implicit.⁴³ This fact should not be too surprising. As has been noticed by other historians of the period, the nominalists at Cologne had already been reduced to a minority by 1425.⁴⁴ Their tradition of Buridanism, which was well established by the late-fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century,⁴⁵ was succeeded by the realism of those masters who taught Aristotle from the

39. *Ibid.*, f. 7vb: “[...] accipiuntur ab intellectu absque conditionibus individuantiis, et secundum tale esse competit eis definitio universalis, scilicet esse unum in multis et de multis.” For this definition, cf. *Auctoritates Aristotelis*, 36, 124, ed. J. HAMESSE, Louvain / Paris 1974, p. 321, 76; THOMAS AQUINAS, *Sentencia libri de anima*, I, 1, ed. Leon. 45.1, Paris 1984, p. 7, 215–218.

40. *Ibid.*: “Et hoc modo naturae humanae secundum esse quod habet in apprehensione, qua apprehenditur praeter condiciones individuantes, potest attribui respectus speciei vel universalis, non autem secundum esse quod habet in re ad extra [...]”

41. *Ibid.*, f. 7va.

42. Tewes already pointed out – also drawing on Weiler’s thesis – Henry of Gorkum’s generally unconflictual attitude towards the nominalists. See TEWES, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät*, pp. 354–355.

43. By contrast, he is much more concerned with the doctrine “which is ascribed to Plato.” See GERARD DE MONTE, *In De ente et essentia commentum*, f. 15ra.

44. Cf. for example EHRLE, *Der Sentenzenkommentar*, p. 281ff. and MEUTHEN, *Kölner Universitätsgeschichte*, p. 172ff.

45. Cf. TEWES, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät*, p. 285ff.

perspective of Albert and Thomas.⁴⁶ The latter were, if not the only, then surely the most powerful faction in that academic milieu during the entire century. The few vestiges of nominalist doctrine that remained, as we will see, were confined to the teaching of logic in specific school books.

In fact, if we look at both Henry of Gorkum and Gerard de Monte's texts, it becomes clear that it is the realist views of Albert the Great and his followers which are most directly at issue. Indeed, we see how in the dispute over universals Thomists were continually forced to contend with Albert's own ideas, on the authoritative side, and with the Albertists themselves, who were their interlocutors, on the other.

In the text by Henry of Gorkum, the opinion of the Albertists is discussed in the eleventh metaphysical position, which describes distinctive features of the realism of the *via antiqua*, especially by asking whether universals *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem* are to be admitted.⁴⁷ Quite interestingly, Henry describes a core of thinking "communiter concessum." For the Thomist, the common ground of the ancient way's followers is constituted by the rejection of the Platonic universal — which occurs as a *topos* in all treatments of universals⁴⁸ — and by the assumption that the universal, properly speaking, is obtained through intellectual abstraction.⁴⁹ There is still a question, however,

46. Cf. M.J.F.M. HOENEN, "Nominalism in Cologne: the student notebook of the Dominican Servatius Fanckel. With an edition of a *Disputatio Vacantialis* held on July 14, 1480 'Utrum in Deo uno simplicissimo sit trium personarum realis distinctio'," in: S.E. YOUNG (ed.), *Crossing Boundaries at Medieval Universities*, Leiden 2011, pp. 85-114, here pp. 92-93, with further references.

47. *Quaestiones compendiosae*, f. 8ra: "Quaeritur utrum veram positionem cupientes defendere teneantur triplex universale, scilicet ante rem, in re et post rem."

48. The exposition and dismissal of the "Platonic position," so far as it was known from Aristotle's account of it, is a *topos* both in nominalist and in realist treatments on universals. Nominalist authors, in particular, did not miss the opportunity to hint at the heresy entailed in that extreme realism. Cf. for example JOHANNES PARREUDT, *Textus veteris artis* f. a IIIr.

49. See *Quaestiones compendiosae*, f. 8rb: "Pro declaratione huius materiae est advertendum quod quaestio [...] intelligitur de universali secundum rationem universalis. Hoc autem modo aliqua sunt communiter concessa de universali, et aliquid est opinabile pro utraque parte. Exempli gratia, quod non sint [*coni.*: sunt *ed.*] ponenda universalis iuxta positionem quae Platoni imponitur, hoc ab omnibus conceditur. Quod etiam ponenda sint universalis facta per abstractionem intellectus, et prout aliquid in ordine ad actum rationis potest accipi ut unum in multis, communiter est concessum."

about whether there is a sense, apart from those mentioned above, according to which a 'nature' can be called 'universal'.⁵⁰

As for Gerard de Monte, he first explains, with reference to Thomas's three meanings of the essence "in concreto accepta" that nature absolutely considered ("absolute considerata"), nature "as it is in this or in that" ("prout est in hoc vel in illo") and nature "as it is in the soul" ("prout est in anima") are predicable respectively through essential predicates ("praedicata essentialia"), real accidental predicates ("praedicata accidentalia realia") and intentional accidental predicates ("praedicata accidentalia intentionalia").⁵¹ This taxonomy is not found in the text of Thomas, yet became a topos in the later Thomistic doctrine of universals.⁵² This move evidently implies a logical consideration of the "threefold natures" of the *De ente et essentia*. Quite strikingly, however, Gerard further juxtaposes this explanation of the "triformis acceptio naturae" with a "threefold consideration of light."⁵³ After having characterized the distinction proposed in the *De ente et essentia* as a rational one, he uses the three categories *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem* with reference to the functioning of the light in order to describe the three different modes of considering a nature.⁵⁴ This is significant, for further on, Gerard discusses Albert's

50. *Ibid.*: "Utrum autem praeter praedictos modos possit natura humana dici universalis, relinquitur sub dubio. Et sicut exempli gratia dicitur de natura humana, ita universaliter intelligendum est de qualibet alia natura."

51. *Ibid.*, f. 14va-b.

52. For example, we find it expressed quite systematically in the later Commentary on the *De ente et essentia* of the Leipziger Thomist Johannes de Lindholz; see *Quaestiones [de ente et essentia] cum textu beati Thomae Aquinatis in Liptzensi Gymnasio per magistrum Johannem Lintholtz de Monchebergk [...] correctae*, ed. W. MOLITORIS Leipzig 1505, f. B 6r. Johannes combined Thomas's three different considerations of one nature not only with the threefold mode of predication, but also with the threefold distinction of the universal *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*, emphasizing that there is only one nature which can be approached or expressed from different perspectives. In this sense, he departed significantly from Thomas's own exposition. About Johannes de Lindholz and his works cf. M. HÖHLE, *Universität und Reformation. Die Universität Frankfurt (Oder) von 1506 bis 1550*, Köln / Weimar / Wien 2002, pp. 77-82.

53. See GERARD DE MONTE, *In De ente et essentia commentum*, f. 15rb.

54. *Ibid.* The author arrives at the following scheme: the "natura secundum se et absoluta" corresponds to the "lumen [...] in effluxu a corpore lucido ante incidentiam in nubem yrialem," and is also called "formal ypostasis" of the individuals ("natura ante rem"), as light is "quodammodo formalis hypostasis colorum." The "natura considerata ut est recepta in suis singularibus" corresponds to the "lumen secundum quod est diffusum in dyaphonum densum" ("natura in re"); finally, nature considered "prout est a

and the Albertists' doctrine of universals, taking into account their own light metaphor, according to which the first cause is the first light radiating forms. In this discussion, Gerard rejects the Albertist position.⁵⁵ As in the *Quaestiones compendiosae*, the breaking point with the Albertists is represented by a different understanding of the *universale ante rem* and *in re*,⁵⁶ whereas the assertion of the universal as *post rem* is somehow taken for granted.

Now, one should notice that the discussion of Albert and the Albertists' opinion occupies considerable space in both commentaries. This fact could be construed as a mere consequence of institutional rivalry. As we will see, however, there were also deeper doctrinal reasons behind this polemic between two parties belonging to the same *via*, namely that of moderate realism.

3. *The Albertist Side*

Considerations of space prevent any detailed discussion of the historical facts which pertain to the arrival and establishment in Cologne of powerful followers of the *via antiqua*. We have known for some time, from the extant documents, about the patterns which brought Parisian Albertists and Thomists to Cologne.⁵⁷ It has also already been pointed out how Henry of Gorkum, the *monarcha thomistarum*, invited Heymericus de Campo, pupil of the Parisian Albertist Johannes de Nova Domo, from Diest to Cologne — thus opening

singularibus abstracta et ab intellectu communiter apprehensa" corresponds to the "lumen secundum quod a corpore denso illuminato resilit spiritualiter multiplicando suos radios visibiles ad potentiam visivam" ("natura post rem").

55. *Ibid.*, f. 16rb ff. The vocabulary of the light as *hypostasis colorum*, derived from Aristotle (cf. *De anima*, II, 7, 418b 9-10) and often used by Albert the Great as a term of similitude (as noticed by A. DE LIBERA, *La mystique rhénane d'Albert le Grand à Maître Eckhart*, Paris 1994, p. 161, n. 107), was for example present in Johannes de Nova Domo's *Treatise on Universals*, where it functioned as a term of comparison for the light of the form-giving principle, i.e., the *causa prima* or the intelligence. Cf. G. MEERSSEMAN, "Eine Schrift des Kölner Universitätsprofessors Heymericus de Campo oder des Pariser Prof. Johannes de Nova Domo?," in: *Jahrbuch des kölnischen Geschichtsvereins* 18 (1936), pp. 144-168, here p. 153: "Sicut enim lumen est hypostasis colorum, sic lumen intelligentiae est radix formae, in eo quod est communicabilis."

56. After having described the subdivision of a nature *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*, Gerard notices (*ibid.*, f. 16ra): "Et ob id nonnulli distinguunt triplex universale, scilicet ante rem, in re et post rem, accipientes universale extenso modo."

57. Cf. TEWES, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät*, pp. 332 ff.

the way for the inauguration of an institutionalized Albertist school in the German region.⁵⁸

Now, the first work of Heymericus in Cologne, written about 1423, became a sort of manifesto for the Albertist school, which gained its own *bursa* around that time. In his *Tractatus problematicus*, or *Problemata inter Albertum Magnum et sanctum Thomam*, Heymericus took on the task of tracing the boundaries of his own doctrinal line by first strongly criticizing the doctrine of universals held by Platonists and nominalists, and then discussing eighteen problems on philosophical subjects. His goal was to show that Albert's interpretations of Aristotle in many cases not only differed from, but were also superior to Aquinas's.⁵⁹ Heymericus's declared intention was in fact to reaffirm the true Aristotelian doctrine on universals, from which the *moderni* had deviated, and to solve some doctrinal disagreements among the *antiqui*.⁶⁰ But in the background Heymericus aspired to grant the Albertist way the label of authentic heir to the Aristotelian tradition.⁶¹ In doing so, he first investigated the nature of universals, which he defined as "cardines et principia cuiuslibet artis et scientiae."⁶² Among other things, he demonstrated that universals possess a reality not as "separated from singular beings, as the *Platonici* maintain," nor as merely *post rem*, that is, as mere abstractions or "common concepts," as the *moderni* held.⁶³ Then, and most impor-

58. See the information provided in the *Invectiva* of Heymericus de Campo: MEERSSEMAN, *Geschichte des Albertismus II*, p. 6* (114). For the biography of Heymericus, see F. HAMANN, *Das Siegel der Ewigkeit. Universalwissenschaft und Konziliarismus bei Heymericus de Campo*, Münster 2006, pp. 17-63.

59. See HEYMERICUS DE CAMPO, *Problemata inter Albertum Magnum et sanctum Thomam ad utriusque opinionis intelligentiam multum conferentia*, ed. J. LANDEN, Köln 1496 (GW 12405) [hereafter abbreviated as: *Problemata*]. The list of the extant manuscripts of the *Tractatus problematicus* is provided in P. RUTTEN, "Contra occanicam discoliam modernorum: The So-Called *De universali reali* and the Dissemination of Albertist Polemics against the *via moderna*," in: *Bulletin de Philosophie médiévale* 45 (2003), pp. 131-165, esp. 162-163.

60. See HEYMERICUS DE CAMPO, *Problemata*, f. a IIr.

61. Cf. for example HOENEN, "Comment lire," p. 112.

62. See HEYMERICUS DE CAMPO, *Problemata*, f. a IIr.

63. *Ibid.*, f. a IIIr-v. On Heymericus's doctrine of universals see G. MEERSSEMAN, *Geschichte des Albertismus II*, pp. 28-33; RUTTEN, "Contra occanicam discoliam modernorum" and Mario Meliàdò's contribution in this issue, "*Scientia peripateticorum*. Heymericus de Campo, the *Book of Causes*, and the Debate over Universals in the Fifteenth Century." On the Albertists' view of the problem, see also S. WLODEK, "Albert le Grand

tantly, Heymericus devoted himself to the long and accurate treatment of the *problemata* between “Albertists and Thomists.”⁶⁴ That is, after having decidedly dismissed the position of the radical realists and of the nominalists, Heymericus still felt forced to question the opinion of Thomas and his followers about “whether the universal *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem* are the same thing.”⁶⁵ This fact is very significant. As has been shown, Heymericus’s main objection against the nominalists — i.e., that they destroy the possibility of a real science by reducing the universal to a “tenuis similitudo singularium”⁶⁶ — was also directed against the Thomist conception.⁶⁷ Heymericus maintained, following his master Johannes de Nova Domo, the essential unity and existential diversity of the threefold universal *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*, employing Albert’s idea of *fluxus* in order to ground this hierarchy of universal beings. This theory, so Heymericus thought, was able to ground knowledge, insofar as it assumed that the object known through the universal species is essentially the real object itself, the universal essence instantiated in the individual thing.⁶⁸ Notoriously, this picture was not to be found in Thomas. Moreover, Thomists, as we have briefly seen, traditionally tended to attribute complete universality only to the universal concept known by the mind. In this sense, Heymericus’s account of universals questioned the theoretical foundation of the Thomists, charging them with an inability to found a real science.⁶⁹

Taking into account this evidence, it is not difficult to understand why Thomists engaged themselves in quite detailed analyses of the arguments of the Albertists. For example, Gerard de Monte almost

et les albertistes du XV^e siècle. Le problème des universaux,” in: A. ZIMMERMANN (ed.), *Albert der Große. Seine Zeit, sein Werk, seine Wirkung*, Berlin / New York 1981, pp. 193-207; DE LIBERA, *La querelle des universaux*, pp. 434-440; H. WELS, “Einige Spezifika des Albertistischen Universalienrealismus bei Johannes de Nova Domo und in einem anonymen *Tractatus de universalis natura*,” in: CESALLI – GERMANN – HOENEN (eds.), *University, Council, City*, pp. 97-111.

64. See HEYMERICUS DE CAMPO, *Problemata*, f. a VIr: “Restat nunc [...] dissolvere problemata inter Albertistas et Thomistas [...]”

65. *Ibid.*, f. b Iv: “Problema secundum erat an idem esset universale ante rem, in re et post rem.”

66. *Ibid.*, f. b IIr and also f. a IIIv.

67. Cf. MELIADÒ, “*Scientia peripateticorum*,” p. 209.

68. *Ibid.*, f. b IIr.

69. Cf. MELIADÒ, “*Scientia peripateticorum*,” pp. 206-210.

certainly had Heymericus's work in mind, as testified by his later direct reply to Heymericus, which I will discuss below. And even though we are not sure about the dating of the *Quaestiones* of Henry of Gorkum, we can justifiably assume that the master operated in a context in which the sort of critique formulated by Heymericus was common. Indeed, Heymericus's instructor, Johannes de Nova Domo, who taught in the same Parisian milieu as the *monarcha thomistarum*, had already traced in his *De esse et essentia*, as well as in his *Treatise on Universals*, the doctrinal line later followed in Cologne.

4. *The Thomistic Strategy: Canonization and Inclusion*

Since they approached the question on universals within the framework of the *De ente et essentia*, Thomists felt more or less obliged to defend Aquinas's position. At the same time, however, they had to pay close attention to the other realist position, i.e., the Albertist one, which depended on a metaphysical system quite different from that of Thomas and which claimed to be the truer heir to the Aristotelian tradition. Faced with this double need, the Thomists chose a strategy of both differentiating their own position from that of their rivals, while also including aspects of it.

The general formulation of the problem by Henry of Gorkum in the *Quaestiones compendiosae* is quite revealing. It concerns the true doctrine of the "philosophers." Henry sets in opposition to one another the opinion of the ancients, who maintained that the only real universals are those *post rem*,⁷⁰ and the opinion of Albert the Great, who "stated that according to the philosophers there must be three universals, i.e., *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*."⁷¹ Albert's doctrine is described through the notion of "communicability and participability" of each form and by explicitly recalling some passages of the master's *Commentary* on Book V of the *Metaphysics*.⁷² Predictably,

70. See *Quaestiones compendiosae*, f. 8ra: "Et videtur primo auctoritatibus quod solum sint ponenda universalia post rem, cum universale sit per abstractionem intellectus."

71. *Ibid.*: "In oppositum est auctoritas venerabilis domini Alberti, asserentis etiam hanc esse mentem philosophorum, quod triplex sit ponendum universale, scilicet ante rem, in re et post rem."

72. *Ibid.*, ff. 8rb-9va. The author first maintains that "[...] venerabilis dominus Albertus in diversis locis suae doctrinae distinguit universale in universale ante rem, in re et

given his Thomistic leaning, Henry's own conclusion rests on that first position of the "ancients": "Loquendo igitur proprie, nullum est universale ante rem vel in re, sed post rem praecise."⁷³ Nevertheless, Henry also suggests a compromise solution in order to incorporate the opinion of Albert, albeit one that Albert himself might not have accepted. This compromise is effected through the distinction between *proprie loquendo* and *communiter loquendo*. In a proper sense, and also speaking "according to the perfect and complete concept of universality,"⁷⁴ universals are only intellectual entities, as the Thomists generally held. In a broader sense (*loquendo communiter*), however — which is to say, taking the universal as something communicable or as something indifferently related to many things — then "we can also concede the *universale ante rem*."⁷⁵ And it is in this last sense, we read, that Albert the Great understood the nature of universals.⁷⁶ The compromise is achieved, then, through a neutralization of Albert's proper metaphysical assumptions and from an attribution to his doctrine of a weaker comprehension of the term "universal" itself.⁷⁷ The last word on the question is, however, Thomas's. The *sententia sancti Doctoris* is presented as a general exegetical model; it is literally "canonized." It reads as follows: "[...] ratio universalis solum potest attribui naturae humanae prout significatur ut forma

post rem." Then, with reference to the twofold modes of consideration of a *universale ante rem*, he specifies: "Hos igitur duos modos universalis ante rem enumerat super V *Metaphysicae*." Further on (f. 9vb), the same work is recalled with respect to Albert's distinction of a universal *actu*, *potentia*, *natura* and *opinione*. For the corresponding passages in Albert the Great's work see ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Metaphysica. Libri quinque priores*, V, 6, 5, ed. B. GEYER (Opera Omnia, 16.1), Münster 1960, p. 285, 8 ff.

73. See *Quaestiones compendiosae*, f. 8va. Furthermore, cf. f. 9ra: "Relinquitur ergo quod solum sit universale post rem, non solum propter abstractionem, sed in quantum quilibet intellectus potest quamlibet formam comparare ad multa de quibus enunciat, ut una in apprehensione, et secundum hoc adinvenire [*coni.*: advenire *ed.*] respectum speciei vel generis vel universalis."

74. The Latin text reads here: "secundum perfectam et completam universalis rationem."

75. *Ibid.*: "[...] loquendo communiter prout idem reputantur esse multis communicabile seu indifferenter se habere ad multa et esse universale, tunc non est difficile concedere universalia ante rem." On the notion of communicability with respect to universals, see further footnote 82.

76. *Ibid.*: "Unde Albertus, si bene inspiciatur, videtur secundum talem acceptionem procedere."

77. *Ibid.*: "Sed hoc est loqui de universali secundum quandam inchoationem suae rationis [...]."

totius et secundum esse quod habet in apprehensione rationis.”⁷⁸ Notably, the opinion is not a verbatim citation from Thomas, but rather a sort of brief comment on chapter 3 of the *De ente et essentia*. This sort of summary demonstrates the most recognizable kernel of the Thomistic doctrine of universals. Quite interestingly, Thomas is explicitly cited only at the end of the argumentation. If we look carefully, his opinion sounds like a legitimation of the common ground admitted by the realists and, moreover, as a loyal reworking of the opinion of the ancients. In addition, Albert’s position is in a sense enclosed in this hermeneutical development. Correspondingly, the doctrine of the *De ente et essentia*, which remains the framework of the exposition, is expanded through foreign categories in order to encompass the rival position.

If we turn now to Gerard’s commentary, we find that the arguments employed there to engage the followers of Albert are very similar to those in Henry’s handbook. Gerard maintains the existence of the solely universal *post rem*, as far as the proper universal is concerned.⁷⁹ He thus rejects the radical presupposition of the Albertists, namely, the idea that every form as such, insofar as it is communicable and participable — throughout its *fluxus* — is a universal: *ante rem* as it is in the light of the first cause, *in re* as it is instantiated in individuals, and *post rem* as it is abstracted by the intellect.⁸⁰ As was the case with Henry, Gerard refuses to completely dismiss the position of his Albertist rivals; quite the contrary. That is, he also admits a threefold characterization of the universal, to the extent that it is more widely, and not properly, intended as “communicable,” or as “that nature which can fall under the intention of universality.” In

78. *Ibid.* The sentence is introduced as follows: “Et per consequens canonisatur sententia sancti doctoris.”

79. As in the *Quaestiones compendiosae*, this thesis is immediately referred by Gerard to the authority of the “philosophers,” that is, Aristotle, Boethius, Avicenna and Averroes. Cf. GERARD DE MONTE, *In De ente et essentia commentum*, f. 16ra.

80. The principle on which “many [philosophers]” base their assertions is, according to Gerard’s own words, that: “[...] quaelibet forma secundum quod huiusmodi est communicabilis et participabilis pluribus, et per consequens quaelibet forma, quantum est de se, est universalis” (*ibid.*, f. 16ra-b). Gerard’s description of the theory of the Albertists and then of Albert is also to be found at f. 16 ra-b. Henrik Wels has maintained that Gerard’s account of Albert’s doctrine of universals is strictly dependent on some passages of the *Tractatus universalium* composed by Johannes de Nova Domo; see WELS, “Einige Spezifika,” pp. 103-106.

this sense the threefold universal falls within a nature considered as *ante rem*, that is, as absolute, *in re*, that is, in individuals, and *post rem*, that is, in the intellect, according to the above-mentioned physical light-metaphor.⁸¹ Since this threefold mode of considering a nature is just what Thomas put in chapter 3 of the *De ente et essentia*, while recalling the famous Avicennian doctrine, it is clear how Albert's and the Albertists' threefold distinction is finally, though implicitly, traced back to Aquinas. Through the identification of the universal — comprehended in its general, if incomplete sense — with the nature considered and predicated as universal, and through a vague employment of the idea of *communicabilitas*,⁸² Gerard opened the way for a position that pretended to incorporate his rivals' doctrine

81. See GERARD DE MONTE, *In De ente et essentia commentum*, f. 16va: "[...] si universale accipiat prout idem est quod communicabile vel pro ipsa natura quae potest subici intentioni universalitatis, tunc est admittenda distinctio universalis, qua universale dividitur in universale ante rem natura tantum, et in universale in re, et in universale post rem. Et haec distinctio correspondet triplici acceptioni naturae in littera superior recitatae."

82. The idea of the *communicabilitas* proper to the universal was at the center of Albert's and the Albertists' account on the topic. For example, Johannes de Nova Domo's *Treatise on universals* opened with a *quaestio* which read: "Quaeritur utrum universale, quod est forma, communicabilitatem propriam habeat ex hoc quod est universale in re, vel ex hoc quod est universale ante rem." See MEERSSEMAN, "Eine Schrift," p. 152. Heymericus de Campo, in one passage of his *Tractatus problematicus* (f. b IIIr-v), made clear that the communicability of a form derived "secundum quod naturaliter praevenit proportionem ipsius cum materia, quomodo dicitur forma tantum et radius luminis intelligentiae suae primae causae, quae secundum auctorem *De causis* [...] nominatur a philosophis nomine sui primi causati, intelligentia." Thomist masters, as we have seen, were very aware of the centrality of this notion in their rivals' position. They had also to admit it in a certain way in order to preserve the Aristotelian definition of a universal as something which is "aptum natum esse unum in multis et de multis." In this sense, then, they attributed a very general sense to the word *communicabilitas*, as is shown in this passage from the *Quaestiones compendiosae* (f. 8va): "[...] notandum est circa expositionem quorundam nominum, quibus utimur circa praesentem materiam, videlicet 'communicabile', 'participabile' et 'universale.' Nam aliquid dicitur 'communicabile' quia potest pluribus convenire. 'Participabile' vero dicitur quia alicui convenit per plenitudinem et aliis derivatur secundum partes [...]. Et ideo ubicumque est participatio, ibi est communicatio, sed non e contra, sicut in divinis ipsa essentia communicatur, sed non participatur. Universale vero superaddit praedictis unitatem: haec enim duo, scilicet unitas et pluralitas, clauduntur in ratione universalis. Nam universale dicitur quod est vel aptum natum esse unum in multis et de multis." By distinguishing between the *participatio* and the *communicatio*, the author perhaps had in mind a revealing passage from Albert's *Metaphysics*; cf. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Metaphysica*, V, 6, 6, p. 286, 26-46.

— neutralizing, once again, the proper sense of the Albertists' doctrine of the *fluxus* of the universal essence.⁸³

A clearer picture is now beginning to emerge. In the two commentaries originating from the Montane College, chapter 3 of the *De ente et essentia* is canonized, as it were, as a "treatise on universals" in virtue of an established set of positions directly coming from the text. However, in comparing the traditional categories concerning the problem of the threefold existence of universals with the doctrines of their rivals, the followers of Thomas imposed on his text a variety of notions external to it. So, on the one hand, the universal in a strict sense is located exclusively in the intellect in order to avoid the metaphysical consequences of the Albertist doctrine of universals. At the same time, a certain 'communicative' reality, i.e., communicability, of the nature to which the universal refers seems to be stated in order to demarcate the realistic terrain.

This reformulation, however, was not free of ambiguities. The first move implies the introduction of a double distinction in the concept of "universal," i.e., universal in a proper sense, and universal in a broader sense. The second move requires the confrontation, albeit in

83. Interestingly enough, the famous Erfurter nominalist master Bartholomeus Arnoldi de Usingen, discussing the problem of universals in one *Exercitium* collected in Erfurt some decades later, gave the following explanation concerning the doctrine of the *Thomistae* (see BARTHOLOMEUS ARNOLDI DE USINGEN, *Exercitium veteris artis in Studio Erffordiensis collectum*, ed. J. KNAPPUS, Erfurt 1514, f. C IIIv): "Et huiusmodi universale dicitur universale post rem, quia fit per abstractionem a singularibus, quae est post singularia [...]. Sed quod beatus Thomas in *Scripto circa Secundum Sententiarum* dicit naturam in particularibus esse universale in re, et abstractam a singularibus esse universale post rem, et universales formas rerum in mentibus angelorum esse universalia ante rem, intelligitur de universali communiter accepto, pro quocumque communicabili. Sed latior explanatio horum videatur apud Thomistas." (Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Super Sent.*, II, 3, 3, 2, ad 1, ed. P. MANDONNET, p. 117.) The nominalist therefore, reporting the opinion of his rivals, seems to confirm Gerard de Monte's own move. Bartholomeus indeed informs us that when Thomas spoke of a threefold universal – in a passage that had to puzzle the Thomists themselves, as we have noticed – he referred to it as universal "in a common sense," as "communicable" in a general way. But that is just the way Gerard explains the possible admission of the Albertists' threefold universal! On the Erfurter nominalist Bartholomeus von Usingen, see KLEINEIDAM, *Universitas Studii Erffordensis*, pp. 143 ff., 300-303; URBAN, "Die 'via moderna'"; S. LALLA, *Secundum viam modernam. Ontologischer Nominalismus bei Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen*, Würzburg 2003, esp. pp. 274-285; P. KÄRKKÄINEN, "Bartholomaeus Arnoldi de Usingen," in: H. LAGERLUND (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*, Dordrecht 2011, pp. 144-145.

a negative way, of Thomas's nature "absolutely considered" as well as his nature considered "in re" with two types of universals. Neither move was present in the *De ente et essentia*. And in the two commentaries there seems to be no other direct mention of any of Thomas's other texts.

5. *Concordism in the Tractatus ostendens*

All things considered, in both of the Cologne Thomist commentaries on the *De ente et essentia*, the desire to find a common ground with the Albertists, in spite of their differences, seems to exceed the desire for an accurate exegesis of Thomas's works. Moreover, the Thomist strategy in dealing with the Albertists' provocations rests on the neutralization of their rivals' doctrine by embracing it — albeit in a diminished and distorted form.

This tendency found an ideological and crystallized expression in Gerard de Monte's *Tractatus ostendens concordiam sancti Thomae et venerabilis Alberti*, written in 1456 in Cologne as a polemical — if not prompt — answer to Heymericus de Campo's *Tractatus problematicus* from 1423; Gerard's work was later printed five times.⁸⁴ Gerard's treatise had the declared aim of correcting Heymericus's reading of Thomas Aquinas and of Thomas's teacher Albert the Great, in order to make evident the substantial harmonization of their opinions.⁸⁵ As stated by the author himself, the work was intended to show the unity of the positions of the two thinkers — who, after all, belonged to the same religious order and were both devoted to the same truth. Secondly, Gerard expressly aimed to avoid the erroneous interpretation of Thomas's words that had been conveyed by the

84. Gerard's work, which has been transmitted, as far as I know, in seven manuscripts all originating from Central Europe, was printed in Cologne in 1485/86, ca. 1489, 1493, 1497 and ca. 1503. I am currently preparing a critical edition of the text in the framework of the ANR-DFG Project "Thomismus und Antithomismus im Mittelalter"; for this paper, I will use the incunable of 1497, which also contains Gerard's *Apologia*, i.e., his response to Heymericus's own reaction (*Invectiva*) to the *Tractatus ostendens*. Moreover, this edition includes, among other texts, Aquinas's *De ente et essentia* and Gerard's own commentary on it. As to the *Tractatus ostendens*, see GERARD DE MONTE, *Tractatus [...] ad favorem dirigens concordiam quaedam problemata inter sanctum Thomam et venerabilem Albertum Magnum [...]*, ed. H. QUENTELL, Köln 1497.

85. Cf. HOENEN, "Comment lire."

Tractatus problematicus.⁸⁶ Finally, the work was intended to function as an interpretative key to Albert's philosophical production, contrasting with that of Heymericus. The question of the definition of true Aristotelianism and a 'theologizing' conception of philosophy permeate the treatise as well. Gerard examined all the questions set down by Heymericus, adding three more seeming "contrarietates."

In his reply to the second problem posed many years before by the Albertist, Gerard seemed to take seriously Heymericus's criticism that the Thomists' theory of universals was unable to ground a real science.⁸⁷ Once again, however, Gerard revises the Albertist contention to suit his own purposes. In accordance with his more general strategy, Gerard professes to show that Albert and Thomas defended the same doctrine. The Thomist bases his solution on the discussion of the nature of the universal *post rem* in Thomas's account, trying to show how it is, in a sense, the concrete thing in the world. At the same time, he suggests that, on the one hand, Albert had not maintained a strong identity between the three universals; and that, on the other hand, Thomas did state a certain identity among them.⁸⁸ Gerard achieves this 'common ground' of 'relative identity' by combining passages from Thomas's œuvre with a few connecting comments. He first explains that Thomas defined the universal *post rem*, i.e., "what is predicable of many individuals," as the "primary objective goal of the intellection," or *intentio intellecta*, and not as the "intelligible species habitually informing the intellect."⁸⁹ He then

86. Cf. GERARD DE MONTE, *Apologetica sive responsiva [...] ad quandam Invectivam a nonnullo recenti et opulento philosopho [...]*, ed. H. QUENTELL, Köln 1497, f. g IVra: "[Tractatus problematicus] ponit enim sancti Thomae et venerabilis Alberti sententias et rationes contrarias esse, et nihilominus determinat veritatem continere illam sententiam quam dicit esse venerabilis domini Alberti. Ex quibus constat sequi falsam esse sententiam contrariam, quam assignat sancto Thomae."

87. Gerard's reply to Heymericus's *secundum problema* is to be found in his *Tractatus ostendens*, f. 28ra-va.

88. On Gerard's discussion see also MEERSSEMAN, *Geschichte des Albertismus* II, pp. 72-73.

89. See GERARD DE MONTE, *Tractatus ostendens*, f. 38rb: "Non enim sanctus Thomas sentit quod species intelligibilis habitualiter informans intellectum ad intelligendum sit universale post rem et praedicabile de individuīs, sed quod universale post rem sit terminus obiectalis primarius ipsius intellectionis, cui termino convenit magis identificari cum re ad extra, quam ipsi habituali speciei intelligibili."

builds on his constellation of citations,⁹⁰ where the notion of *similitudo* acts as an interpretative key.⁹¹ According to those passages from Thomas's on which he relied, the principle and tool of intellection (i.e., the intelligible species), the universal concept or intention, and the known object, comprise a unity in their similitude. In this portrayal of Thomas's doctrine, the master conveyed the idea that the content of knowledge is, in a certain sense, the thing in the extra-mental world, that is, the nature (such as humanity) comprehended without individuating conditions. Moreover, he achieved his aim of harmonization. However, it is remarkable that he did not directly touch the core of Heymericus's doctrine, i.e., the assertion of the essential unity of the universal *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*. Nor did he discuss the most original notions that could be found in Albert's works.⁹²

By translating Heymericus's critique from an ontological to a gnoseological level, Gerard made clear what he regarded as the proper terrain of the Thomistic doctrine on the topic. But at the same time, he avoided confronting the substantial difference between Albert's and Thomas's accounts of universals. This feature matches the strategy pursued by Gerard in his solution to other controversies. For reasons that I cannot go into here, the concordance of Albert's and Thomas's positions was for Gerard an important goal to be pursued without sacrificing accuracy of exegesis. That is, in contrast with Heymericus's more 'eclectic' exegeses of Albert and Thomas, grounded

90. Gerard quotes in a quite literal way Thomas's *De ente et essentia*, his *Expositio libri Peryermenias*, the *Summa theologiae*, the *Summa contra gentiles*, his *Quodlibet V* and the pseudepigraphic *Tractatus de verbo*. Cf. *ibid.*, f. 38rb-va.

91. In the long passage from the *Summa contra gentiles*, quoted by Gerard (*Tractatus ostendens*, f. 38va), Thomas maintained that both the intelligible species and the goal of the intellectual operation, or *intentio intellectiva*, are "similitudes of the intellected thing:" the first acts as principle and instrument of the intellection, and gives form to the intellect, whereas the second is formed by the intellect according to similitude. Therefore, as the intellect becomes similar to the external thing, and produces an intention similar to that thing, one can conclude that "the intellect, by forming such an intention, knows that thing." Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra gentiles, cum Commentariis Francisci de Sylvestris Ferrariensis*, I, 53, ed. Leon. 13, Roma 1918, pp. 150-151.

92. It is noteworthy that the only quotations from Albert the Great given by Gerard in this context are taken from the *De homine*, and not from those later works where the master elaborated a more robust and characteristic theory on the nature of universals. On Albert's doctrine of universals see DE LIBERA, *La querelle des universaux*, pp. 245-262.

in a selective use of their texts, Gerard adopts a literal approach to their texts. Having confused the real opinions of the masters with the successive interpretations of their heirs and followers was in fact for the Thomist the very root of his rival's error.⁹³

6. *Other Accounts on Universals*

If we look at the treatment of the question of universals in other later texts either written by Lambertus de Monte, the leader of the *Bursa Montana* from 1480 until his death in 1499, or prepared under his direction, we find a different approach, i.e., one that does not demonstrate a desire to harmonize Albert and Thomas. In his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, for example, Lambert devoted considerable space to the problem of universals, answering traditional questions on the subject.⁹⁴ Quite strikingly, however, Thomas's text is never explicitly cited; nevertheless, his doctrine seems to have been internalized. The threefold division of nature originating from the *De ente et essentia* is combined with the notions of the universal *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*, and with the attribution of essential, real accidental and rational accidental predicates,⁹⁵ but not discussed in relation to other positions. The universal in the intellect is labelled as "universale perfectum,"⁹⁶ or as universal "according to the perfect concept of universality,"⁹⁷ and is said to be in a "fundamental" way in external things.⁹⁸

93. See GERARD DE MONTE, *Apologetica sive responsiva...ad quendam Invektivam a nonnullo recenti et opulento philosopho [...]*, ed. H. QUENTELL, Köln 1497, f. g IIrb.

94. See LAMBERT DE MONTE, *Copulata in libros De anima Aristotelis*, ed. H. QUENTELL, Köln 1487 ca. (GW M16768) [hereafter abbreviated as *Copulata in De anima*], f. b Ira ff. We are concerned here with the prologue of the commentary, where Lambert begins to address questions about the "unity of the definition of the soul," and then goes on to discuss universals.

95. Cf. LAMBERT DE MONTE, *Copulata in De anima*, f. b IIrb-b IIvb.

96. *Ibid.*, f. b IIra.

97. *Ibid.*, f. b IIvb: "Dicendum quod universale accipitur dupliciter. Uno modo secundum perfectam rationem universalitatis, et sic semper universale post rem est posterius suis singularibus [...] Alio modo accipitur universale secundum quod est ante rem vel in re, et sic est prius singularibus [...]."

98. *Ibid.*, f. b IIra: "[...] universale perfectum, quod est universale post rem, est in rebus fundamentaliter [...]."

A similar approach can be found in some Thomist logical *Copulata*, which were expounded “secundum doctrinam Thomae Aquinatis.” Here, while introducing the second *Treatise* of Peter of Spain’s *Summulae*, Lambert — or some of the masters at the *Bursa*, since the text is a product of the collective work of the College — made a distinction between the universal as a first and as a second intention.⁹⁹ Now, as a second intention, the universal is described as a *relatio rationis*, and therefore confined to a solely intellectual existence. But with regard to the universal as a *prima intentio* or a *natura universalis*, the author differentiates (1) an incomplete or potential universal, which is the essence or nature within individual beings, and (2) a complete or actualized universal. The latter he characterizes as “that nature deprived of its singularity” by the intellect. The former is “in potentia remota” with respect to its possibility of being predicated of many things, whereas the latter is “in potentia propinqua” to being predicated.¹⁰⁰ In fact, the “predicability” of the universal is the proper subject of the text, in accordance with the Porphyrian tradition. In this sense, the triple distinction of the *universale ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*, together with the threefold consideration of the *natura communis*, is integrated into a ‘predicational’ discussion of the

99. Cf. *Copulata commentaria textui omnium Tractatum Petri Hispani, etiam Parvorum Logicalium et trium Modernorum [...] secundum irrefragabilem et fundatissimam doctrinam divi Thomae Aquinatis Peripateticorum interpretis veracissimi, ac iuxta frequens exercitium magistrorum Coloniensis Gymnasii in Bursa Montis regentium [...]*, ed. H. QUENTELL, Köln 1496 (GW M32350) [hereafter abbreviated as: *Copulata omnium Tractatum Petri Hispani*], f. K IIIv: “Quaeritur utrum universale sit aliquid reale extra intellectum, vel sit solum in intellectu. Dicendum quod universale capitur dupliciter, uno modo pro secunda intentione, ut est quaedam relatio rationis in praedicabili ad intellectum et ad illud de quo est praedicabile. Et hoc universale solum est in intellectu [...]. Alio modo capitur universale pro prima intentione, scilicet pro natura universalis. Et sic accipitur dupliciter. Nam aliquid est universale in potentia et aliquid in actu. Universale in potentia est ipsa quidditas, vel natura, quae est in re singulari, cui non repugnat esse in alio singulari quantum est de se, licet sibi repugnet in quantum facta est propria. Et ista natura sic accepta est in potentia remota ut praedicetur de pluribus: et vocatur alio nomine universale incompletum [...]. Et sic universale est aliquid in re ad extra. Sed universale in actu est ipsa natura denudata a singularitate et a conditionibus materialitatis ipsorum singularium. Et est in potentia propinqua ut praedicetur de pluribus, ut vocatur universale completum, quia sibi conveniunt ea quae rationem perfecti universalis complent, sicut sunt unitas, quam habet ut est obiective apud intellectum, et pluralitas, in quantum plurificabilis est in diversis.”

100. Cf. above, quotation in footnote 99.

universale.¹⁰¹ This distinction is definitively limited to the rational level, and is further employed in grounding the rational difference between the sciences of metaphysics, physics and logic.¹⁰² There is no discussion concerning the *existence* of a universal *in re* or *ante rem*, nor is the idea of a communicability of the essence or nature taken into account at all.

Quite evidently, in this work the Thomists felt no obligation to directly confront the Albertists' position. This fact could be due to what H.G. Senger described, with reference to the late fifteenth-century Albertist literature, as the progressive sunset of its "controversial character."¹⁰³ Moreover, the different approach can be related to the kind of text that the Thomists were commenting on, as well as with their employment of it. Indeed, the *Quaestiones compendiosae*, which drew on the doctrine of Henry of Gorkum, were composed, as we have seen, in order to introduce advanced students to first philosophy. Gerard's commentary on the *De ente et essentia* had probably been used in a similar way. In these works, the comparison with Albertist metaphysics was perceived as urgent. The Thomists' logical texts such as the above-mentioned *Copulata*, in contrast, were not aimed at confronting metaphysical themes. Nor were the Albertists' treatises on logic, at least with reference to the problem of universals, a direct polemical point of reference. Even if central views were still differentiated, there seems to have arisen a mixture among some reciprocal positions. In the *Commentum in sex tractatus Summularum logicalium Petri Hispani* composed possibly by Gerardus de Harderwijk (d. 1503), the most prominent Albertist in Cologne at the end of the fifteenth century, in the introduction to the second *Treatise*, a *dubium* was posed concerning "how many universals there are."¹⁰⁴ The answer is typically Albertist: three universals are to be posited,

101. After having elucidated a sixfold typology of universals (*universale in distribuendo, in cognoscendo, in essendo, in causando, in repraesentando, in praedicando*) Lambert concentrates on the last category, the *universale in praedicando*. It is concerning only this one, affirms the master, that one can distinguish three modes of consideration, i.e., as it is *ante rem, in re* and *post rem*. See *Copulata omnium Tractatum Petri Hyspani*, f. K IVv-K Vr.

102. *Ibid.*, f. K Vr.

103. See H.G. SENER, "Albertismus? Überlegungen zur 'via Alberti' im 15. Jahrhundert," in: ZIMMERMANN (ed.), *Albert der Große*, pp. 217-236, here p. 235.

104. Cf. GERARDUS DE HARDERWIJCK, *Commentum in sex tractatus Summularum logicalium Petri Hispani*, ed. U. ZELL, Köln 1492 (GW 10678), f. e VIIIvb: "Secundum

the universal *ante rem* being in its turn, according to Albert, two-fold.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the description of the universal *in re* is made “ad mentem Alberti.”¹⁰⁶ But quite surprisingly, the exposition of the nature of the universal *post rem* reproduces in a quite literal way the position expressed in the *Copulata* produced in the *Bursa Montana*.¹⁰⁷ Thomist accounts of the universal in the mind seem thus to have become uniformly standardized at the end of the century. This must be regarded as a point of convergence with what was perceived, for example, by Gerard de Monte some decades earlier in his commentary on the *De ente et essentia*. Surely, it constituted a shared position.

Finally, as far as the nominalist legacy at Cologne goes, the situation is somewhat complex. For although, as we have seen, the physical presence of nominalists at the University in the late fifteenth century was negligible, nevertheless it is clear, as H. Braakhuis argues, that they nonetheless retained their influence in the Faculty of Arts through their textbooks, which continued to be used.¹⁰⁸ Therefore the nominalist legacy and above all that of Buridan remained a very

dubium est quottuplex est universale.” On the Albertist Gerard see for example TEWES, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät*, pp. 62-63, 378 ff.

105. *Ibid.*: “Solutio: triplex, scilicet ante rem, in re et post rem. Universale ante rem est duplex: unum est ante rem natura et tempore simul, et aliud ante rem natura tantum. Universale ante rem natura et tempore simul non est aliud quam forma in lumine intellectuali primae causae accepta [...]. Ante rem natura tantum et non tempore est natura in esse fluentis principii accepta, praeveniens singularia [...].”

106. *Ibid.*: “Universale in re, quod alio nomine vocatur in essendo, est eadem forma, secundum quod est actu in pluribus individuis [...].” Braakhuis noticed how the position of Gerard of Harderwijck on universals is reminiscent of that of Heymericus in the *Tractatus problematicus*; see H.A.G. BRAAKHUIS, “School Philosophy and Philosophical Schools. The Semantic-Ontological Views in the Cologne Commentaries on Peter of Spain, and the ‘Wegestreit’,” in: A. ZIMMERMANN (ed.), *Die Kölner Universität im Mittelalter*, Berlin / New York 1989, pp. 1-18, here pp. 15-16.

107. *Ibid.*, f. e VIIIvb-f Ira: “Universale post rem, sive in praedicando, est eadem natura communis intentionaliter praesentata intellectui per abstractionem luminis intellectus agentis [...]. Ibi tamen considerandum est quod duplex est universale, scilicet universale in potentia et universale in actu. Universale in potentia est ipsa quidditas vel natura quae est in singulari vel particulari, cui non repugnat esse in alio singulari quantum de se est, licet repugnet sibi in quantum iam individuata. Et ista natura sic accepta vocatur universale in re, et est in potentia remota ad hoc ut praedicetur de multis. Sed universale in actu est ipsa natura seu quidditas denudata a conditionibus individuantes. Et illa est in proxima potentia ut praedicetur de multis.” Also what follows in Harderwijck’s text – that is, the description of ‘forming’ the universal *post rem* – is formulated in the same manner as in the Thomistic *Copulata*.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

real interlocutor for the Cologne Thomists when it came to matters concerning logic.¹⁰⁹ Given this evidence, the focusing (e.g., in the *Copulata* written at the *Bursa Montana*) on the “complete” and “incomplete” nature of the universal in order to explain the relationship between the universal in the mind and the nature individuated by material conditions, allowed Thomists to maintain a middle position between that of the nominalists, on the one hand, and that of a more radical, ‘Platonic’ realism, on the other.¹¹⁰ In any case, the absence of any confrontation with the Albertists’ metaphysical critiques permitted them to affirm the intellectual character of the universal as such and to avoid any further discussion about the ontological property of the nature or essence to which the intention of universality refers. The legitimating idea of its “potential universality” is here just taken for granted.

7. *Concluding Remarks*

This last position defended in Thomist logical texts is reminiscent of the one employed in some of the already mentioned pseudo-Thomistic treatises. A ‘moderate’ realism according to which the universal in the mind is an actual being, while the universal as instantiated in the extra-mental thing is merely a potentiality, was in some respects a vulgarization of Thomas’s doctrine on universals. So for example at the end of the fifteenth century the famous Erfurter nominalist, Bartholomeus de Usingen,¹¹¹ in his *Summa compendiarie totius logicae*, described the opinion of “beatus Thomas cum suis consecraneis” concerning the universal in being using the categories of act and potency.¹¹² The same account was given by Johannes Parreudt, who expounded the position of the realist *Thomatizantes* using the very same words as those found in the Thomist *Copulata*.¹¹³ In all

109. Cf. BRAAKHUIS, “School Philosophy and Philosophical Schools”.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

111. Cf. the bibliographical references in footnote 83.

112. See BARTHOLOMEUS ARNOLDI DE USINGEN, *Summa compendiarie totius logicae*, ed. N. KEPLER, Basel 1507, f. c VIIv. The author claimed that Thomas admitted a common nature “secundum rationem considerandi tantum”, that is, a *potentially* universal common nature whose universality is actualized only in and by the mind.

113. We can reasonably assume that Parreudt had a manuscript or maybe a printed exemplar of Lambert’s handbook, and used it as a kind of vulgarization of the Thomistic

probability, Bartholomeus and Johannes were familiar with the texts of Lambert and those of his pupils, in manuscript or probably even in printed form. From the point of view of the nominalists, Thomas and the Thomists maintained a middle way between the *moderni* on the one hand, and Scotus and his followers on the other. The collection of references utilized by Bartholomeus and Parreudt was not, primarily, taken from the *De ente et essentia*, but rather from other passages of Thomas, for example in his *Scriptum super Sententiis*, Book I, distinction 19,¹¹⁴ and in his lecture on Book VII of the *Metaphysics*.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, this doctrine was to be regarded as combinable with the assertion of the *De ente et essentia*, where universality as such is recognized according to its being in the intellect.

As we have seen, however, it was just this view — which in fact made Thomists closer to the nominalists — that was strongly questioned by the Albertists, both in Paris (with Johannes de Nova Domo) and especially in Cologne (with Heymericus de Campo). Moreover, it was precisely by departing from the *De ente et essentia* and by addressing the question about the existence of a threefold universal — which was as such external to the scope and to the treatment of the *De ente et essentia* itself — that Henry of Gorkum and Gerard de Monte found a way to incorporate the more radical realism of their rivals into Thomas's doctrine. They adopted the notion of communicability,

position. Parreudt summarizes the Thomists' position as follows (JOHANNES PARREUDT, *Textus veteris artis*, f. a IIIv): "Modus ponendi Thomistarum est talis. Universale, quando capitur pro natura universali vel communi, sicut est humanitas, est duplex, scilicet in potentia et in actu. Universale in potentia est ipsa quidditas vel natura quae est in singulari, cui non repugnat esse in alio singulari, quantum est de se, licet sibi repugnet inquantum facta est propria huic singulari per principium individuantis. Et vocatur alio nomine universale incompletum vel fundamentaliter, et est in potentia remota ut praedicetur de pluribus. Universale autem in actu est ipsa natura denudata per intellectum a conditionibus individuandis, utpote a colore, figura et aliis appendiciis. Et tale vocatur universale completum, quia sibi conveniunt ea quae rationem perfecti universalis complent. Et est in potentia propinqua, ut praedicetur de pluribus. Et sic universale completum et formaliter fit ab intellectu agente, qui abstrahit conditionem individuantis, sed fundamentaliter et originaliter est in re." As one can see, nearly the entire passage can be traced back to Lambert's (and also to Gerard of Harderwijk's) exposition.

114. Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, I, dist. 19, quaest. 5, art. 1, p. 486. Actually, Parreudt identifies the passage as corresponding to distinction 18 of the *Scriptum*; see JOHANNES PARREUDT, *Textus veteris artis*, f. A IIIv.

115. Cf. Thomas's *Sententia super Metaphysicam* was quoted for example by JOHANNES PARREUDT, *Textus veteris artis*, f. A IIIv.

which the Albertists used in order to trace the flowing of the same universal essence to different kinds of beings, and employed it in a different meaning, assigning it to that nature to which the attribute of universality can be applied. Consequently they admitted a universal *ante rem* and *in re*, as long as this universal was taken to be a nature or an essence that could pertain to different beings. In so doing, the two Thomists attempted to forge — more rhetorically than substantially — a shared terrain for the two currents in the realist *via antiqua*. The same strategy was pursued by Gerard in his *Tractatus ostendens*. In an effort to programmatically react to Heymericus's critique and thus to grant Thomist science a real foundation *in re*, Gerard employed Thomas's text in order to hint at the identity of the universal term or the objective content of intellection and the thing itself, and finally he tried to show that Albert had basically maintained the same doctrine.

In general, by reworking Thomas's texts and using concepts that were foreign to them, Thomist masters stressed one or the other aspect of a somewhat vague doctrine for the sake of positioning themselves. In this sense, the incompleteness of Aquinas's original reflection on universals implicitly provided his followers with the possibility of developing their own views, without renouncing any claims to superiority over those of their rivals'.

It is fair to assume that those nominalists who read Lambert and the Thomist logical *Copulata* had access also to the *Quaestiones compendiosae* and to Gerard de Monte's *Commentary*, as well as to his *Tractatus ostendens*. As has been shown in the literature, the quantity of printed works from the realist side in Cologne, both from Thomists and from Albertists, was quite massive.¹¹⁶ Confronted with texts belonging to different genres and extensive in scope, late fifteenth-century nominalists could then easily find quite divergent approaches to the same problem, not only between realists of different schools, but also within the very same realist school. The Cologne intellectual environment, with its strong split of the realists into two parties, could therefore be regarded as *the* centre where a manifold production of positions led to an indefinite multiplication of opinions.

116. Cf. E. VOULLIÈME, *Der Buchdruck Kölns bis zum Ende des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Düsseldorf 1978.

Finally, it is perhaps necessary to say some words, in summary, about the Thomist strategy. Despite accusations of ambiguity, which were justifiably levelled against realists in general, and against Thomas's followers in particular, it was the latter that regarded doctrinal and hermeneutical 'unity' and 'concordance' with the Albertists as an important objective. In fact, as has become clear, for the Cologne Thomists, expanding the already mentioned doctrinal 'common ground' in order to construct a unified opinion was a school strategy and a priority. One of the reasons for this concordistic attitude was almost certainly the will, on the part of Thomas's fifteenth-century followers, to present the master's doctrine, not only as superior, but also as the only one that could embrace, and indeed did embrace, the very core of the true Peripatetic tradition.¹¹⁷ As we have seen, the line adopted by the *Bursa Montana* during the fifteenth century was that of legitimating their master's position as the most comprehensive one – that is, as the one which could reasonably make sense of the doctrines of both Albert and Thomas, and as the only one which could effectively silence the charge of division, mostly emanating from the nominalist side.

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117. See my observations in "La *quaestio* 'De salvatione Aristotelis'." For the Thomists, freeing the doctrine of Albert from its subsequent erroneous interpretations by the Albertists was intended to restore an harmonious doctrinal vein, according to the truest Peripatetic direction. What Rutten observes in relation to Petrus Nigri seems to fit this paradigm. Specifically, he notices that Nigri, in his *Chypeus Thomistarum*, criticized Albert's positions, not by mentioning him by name, but only the Albertists. See RUTTEN, "Duae opiniones probabiles," p. 131.